



Evidence-based medicine (EBM) in pre-hospital care: Our 4-year experience in designing and implementing Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG)

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ABSTRACT

Background: In 2011, HMCAS designed new Evidence-Based CPG. The previous protocols were not fit for purpose and not best practice. The service had multiple tiers of clinical practice among staff without standardization of care. CPG development is a knowledge management process to ensure standardization of care and a safer patient experience. This research sets out learning from two rounds of CPG development over 4 years.

Methods: The guidelines development process was mapped prior to starting in January 2015. CPG development and implementation went through 5 steps: 1. Scoping the guidelines: defining the purpose, the scope of service, and the end users of the guidelines. We conducted a staff survey to understand their views on presentation and purpose. 2. Establishing a working group to identify specific guidelines, clinical outcomes desired, and develop a writing template. 3. Conducting evidence reviews to draft the guidelines and then consulting with all role players to ensure guidelines are best practice and practical, and aligned to clinical pathways. 4. Guidelines publication considering ease of use, clarity, and balance between details and practicality. Finally, guidelines approval. 5. Guidelines implementation: Identifying champions to action alignment to systems (logistics/governance/management) and to redesign the corresponding educational curriculum.

Results: The development and implementation of the guidelines has resulted in significant changes within the Ambulance Service over 4 years. Reducing multiple tiers of care down to two tiers, standardized education of 900 existing and new clinical staff around guidelines, implementation of standardized pre-packed equipment within the ambulances, and standardized care to the community. This project was recognized by the MD's Stars of Excellence award 2013.

Conclusions: To implement standardized care and EBM, CPG are required. Guidelines development and implementation needs expertise, collaborative development, and champions who will undertake deliberate alignment of service activities and education to the guidelines.

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